

THE BEACON

FOR SCHOOL AND HOME

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YOU can tell the wheelbarrows of the eighteen provinces apart by their squeak," runs the saying in China, where wheelbarrows are a common method of transportation and their owners too thrifty to use oil. By the variety of sounds on the Big Road, it seemed as though all of the eighteen must be passing, in turn, by the little wayside inn where Ban Tsui lay. He listened in vain, as though for a familiar creak.

Through the cracks in the door against which he lay, he could see the first streak of daylight. There was a stirring in the straw which covered the floor of the room. Coolies were rising, and folding up their rented bedding, and stretching themselves to be sure that they were awake to start on their day's travel. In the big kitchen which adjoined the public lodging place, some one was up. The proprietor's sharp voice spoke to a little child, bidding him be up to feed the fire, that endless task of Chinese childhood. Again the man was calling to a servant to bring water, and have the tea-leaves ready.

Ban Tsui turned his back toward the other lodgers, and faced the outside door through whose cracks he had been looking, and pretended that he was asleep. Of the twenty lodgers who had been crowded upon the floor, a dozen had not yet arisen. Ban Tsui considered that it would be safe for him to remain where he was until the last man was up. But what then? One could not remain sleeping on a public lodging floor all day without attracting attention, in these perilous times of Revolution and military activity. He was sure of the place and time. "Daylight at the Camels' Bridge Inn" had been the instructions Master Ling had read from the Guild Letter.

Master Ling was a weaver, and Ban Tsui was one of his apprentices. He had not come into the weaving establishment by the usual method of

The Wheelbarrow Squeak

By Eva R. Baird

the contract of parents whereby young boys are bound out for a period of years to learn a trade. Ban Tsui was one of those unfortunate famine-refugee children, who had been left by the roadside to die. He had been saved from that fate by Master Ling who, passing that way, had seen in the four-year-old baby a possible way of laying up merit with the gods by an act of charity, and at the same time making a profitable investment for himself in securing a future apprentice at no immediate outlay of money.

In a month's time no one would have recognized in the rollicking little fellow the half-starved famine child. His winsome ways soon made him a pet in the family instead of an oppressed slave. The result of his good treatment was that at fourteen he was strong and rugged, and very loyal to the Ling family. He had worked with the weavers for four years now, but Master Ling had always favored him and trusted him beyond the ordinary apprentice. While the others

stayed steadily by the looms from daylight until dark, Ban Tsui's work was varied with delivering the towels which they wove to local merchants, and sometimes to neighboring towns. He came to know the country, and never had any mishap befallen the goods entrusted to his delivery. It was because of his record for responsibility and resourcefulness that he was now entrusted with the mission which had landed him alone in this dangerous border country.

The other lodgers were slowly rising now. Ban Tsui's eyes and still more his ears were turned toward the cracks in the door beside him. The wheelbarrows on the Big Road were not so close together in the early morning but that each squeak could be plainly heard. Ban Tsui listened intently for each one. Finally, when he dared remain in bed no longer, he too slowly rose and folded up his rented bedding, counting out the exact change to pay for it from the bag he drew out of his bosom.

He was cold and hungry. The steam from the kitchen indicated that tea and noodles were ready for whomever cared to buy. Ban Tsui wondered if he would be able to secure breakfast for himself without speaking. For it would be his speech which would instantly betray him as a Southerner. Not that he was the only Southerner there, but he had more reason than the others for not wanting to be marked as a Southerner. He came out from the lodging room into the kitchen. Passing the huge brick stove, with its iron kettles of noodles, he reached for a bowl of noodles and a small pot of tea in the hands of an employee, and dropped a double dime — about four times the necessary price of what he had taken — into the astonished man's palm, waving his own hand backward in the accustomed gesture of refusal, to indicate that he did not want any change.



"No word was exchanged between the two, but the last coolie surrendered his wheelbarrow willingly to the unknown boy."

No one paid any further attention to the Southern boy as he ate heartily of his warm breakfast, sitting at a small table near the open front of the building. In the cool of the morning other customers preferred the tables nearer the stove, to the few in front that were struck by the cold out-door air.

Ban Tsui ate slowly, noticing every wheelbarrow that passed or started. "Creak-creak-creak." Only an experienced ear would find any meaning in their noises, although they gave forth a variety of sounds to rend the ear. There was a pause in the procession; most of the coolies who had stopped at the Camels' Bridge Inn for the night had gone on with their loads. Ban Tsui was tipping his bowl to get the last noodle with his chopstick. Then he leisurely poured out his tea into the same bowl, and drank slowly. Tea-drinking could be prolonged for an indefinite period, to be sure, but Ban Tsui would take no chance of asking for more hot water to refill his teapot. So he sipped, with long pauses between the sips. His tea was getting cold.

The last coolie was leaving the break-

fast table. He gave a fleeting glance at Ban Tsui, and went out to pick up his wheelbarrow in the courtyard. Ban Tsui watched and listened as he had to the others. The inn-keeper and his family were having their own breakfast after the morning rush. The last coolie pushed his wheelbarrow out into the Big Road. *It did not squeak.*

Gulping down his last swallow of tea, Ban Tsui was up and moving. No word was exchanged between the two, but the last coolie surrendered his wheelbarrow willingly to the unknown boy. Ban Tsui, unnoticed by any one, trudged away with it. He hurried a bit at first, the oiled wheelbarrow moved easily. By noon he was out of the danger zone. No need to look, he knew that somewhere in the closely packed towels on the wheelbarrow he was pushing was a map of strategic Northern territory with its present military defenses, which the Southern cause of liberty must have. It had been entrusted to the Weavers' Guild to have a trustworthy messenger ready to receive it at the Camels' Bridge Inn at daybreak, from a wheelbarrow *that did not squeak.* Ban Tsui has accomplished his mission.

tree, evidently to show me that he considered me his friend, and was not a whit afraid of me. I supposed, that on the very cold nights, he found a warm corner somewhere in this barn.

One morning, as I was working by my window, I looked out and saw Whitetail regarding me very critically from a nearby perch. It happened that I was wearing a dress that Whitetail had not seen before, and which had some trimmings of bright red; it was probably this color that caught Whitetail's attention. I stood quite still and Whitetail came several feet nearer the window, looking me over very attentively all the time as he turned his head from side to side; then he flew back to his former perch, evidently having decided that this strange large creature who fed him each day had simply sprouted some different feathers, better suited to the colder weather, and was not to be feared or avoided any more than when in her other garb.

One of the flickers became very tame while we were feeding him. He would not seem at all disturbed when we stood at the door near his feeding place and watched him eat. As he flew in to dine with us, he generally gave his peculiar call — perhaps a warning to other birds to keep away while he ate. A little brown chickadee which had been much chased and pecked at by juncos and sparrows, took this warning call of the big flicker very much to heart, and hurried to the other side of the house in double-quick time, where he sat down in a peach tree in which Whitetail was having his after-dinner rest; presently the flicker came around to that side of the house, too. Immediately the little chickadee moved close to Whitetail, and on the side away from and out of sight of the flicker.

One day a flock of Alaska robins descended upon us, and Whitetail joined them; we wondered if we would lose him, but no, when they passed on, he was still with us.

Dear little chickadees and juncos and twittering sparrows, we hope you will be with us again next winter.

The cost of the last great war, \$400,000,000,000, would have provided a comfortable home, it has been said, for every family in at least ten countries of the world, or a \$2,500 house erected on a five-acre lot, furnished with \$1,000 worth of furniture, for every family in the United States, Canada, England, Ireland, France, Wales, and Russia, and would have given a \$500,000 hospital and a \$10,000,000 university to every city in these countries of over 200,000 inhabitants. Even then there would have been money left over.

—Our Dumb Animals.

Some Bird Friends and Their Ways

By Lissie C. Farmer

DURING the past winter, we acquired many bird friends, through our habit of constantly putting out food for them whenever there was snow and ice. It was most interesting to see how tame and intimate they became after we had them for dinner guests a few times.

There were dear happy little chickadees with chestnut-brown backs, or with black caps and gray collars; there were black and gray juncos; they were saucy, twittering sparrows, brown-speckled flickers, and, strangest of all to us, a robin with considerable white under his tail; we called him "Whitetail," and wondered how it happened that he had this peculiar coloring.

This robin did not associate with other robins, but seemingly had adopted — or they had adopted him — a flock of sparrows. Possibly he had lost his mate the summer before, and had not gone south with his kind; at any rate, there he was, always coming quite early in the morning for his breakfast, and eating it while the sparrows and juncos respectfully waited nearby; when he had finished, they came down and ate, and afterwards the tiny chickadees slipped in for their repast. Once a flock of very hungry mountain sparrows would not wait for Whitetail, but began eating beside him. He pecked and chased them right and left, but they outwitted him, for seating themselves on bush and tree on each side of him, they came down to

the feeding place from both sides, and while he was chasing off his uninvited guests from one side, those on the other side hastily gobbled as much as they could, or picked up and carried away large pieces of food to be devoured in a leisurely manner in sheltered places out of Whitetail's sight.

One icy, snowy morning, I was working near a window when I heard a mournful "q-r-r-r-t! q-r-r-r-t!" Looking out, I saw Whitetail perched in a quince tree quite close to the window; he was a most dejected looking object, his tail drooping, his head tucked well back to his body, sitting close to a branch of the tree. Suddenly I remembered that I had neglected to put out feed that morning, and, of course, what had been left from the night before was covered with snow and ice. I immediately set out bits of fat, potato, crumbs and apple, and Whitetail feasted. When Whitetail wanted drink, everything fluid being frozen up, he ate snow; I saw him do this again and again on cold days.

We wondered much where he spent his nights in the cold weather. One day I was passing a well warmed barn not far from where we lived. I heard a familiar "q-r-r-r-t! q-r-r-r-t!" I looked up and there was Whitetail cuddled in the boughs of a well-sheltered tree quite close to the barn. No doubt he was trying to give me a good-morning and "thank you" for his breakfast. He sat there while I passed quite near to the

The Shooting Star

By Alvin M. Peterson

THERE are stars among the wild flowers at our feet by day and there are stars in the heavens over our heads at night. During the spring months, we may look at the heavens during the evening hours and see Vega, a pretty bluish-white star, shining there, or we may go to the woods and there see the shooting star and its lovely relative, the star flower, both in bloom, ever ready to add to our happiness. But first we must know them and be able to appreciate their beauty.

The shooting star has a tall flower stalk, a foot or more long in some cases, whereas the star flower, stem and all, is but half as long. The leaves grow at the base of the flower stalk, often forming very pretty rosettes, the leaves, many of them, lying flat on the ground. Others are more or less upright. The star flower has a whorl of leaves at the top of the stem, from the center of which spring one or two hairlike flower stalks at the tips of which are the pretty white starlike flowers. The flowers of the shooting star, if seen from the front, also are star-shaped, though when seen from the side they are cone-shaped. There are a number, sometimes a half-dozen or more of the pretty flowers, some white, some violet, lilac, or some other shade of color. Often one finds a group of the plants near each other, no two of which have flowers of exactly the same shade of color.

The petals of this flower number five and bend sharply backward. The long golden anthers of the stamens are closely clustered forming a cone-shaped tube. This part of the flower reminds one of the sharp bills of some birds.

Shooting stars grow in rich woods and blossom during the months of April and May. Thin woods and wooded hillsides are often dotted with these odd but pretty flowers. The condition of the soil and



The Star Flower

other things have a great influence on the size of the plant. Consequently, many very small, dwarfed ones are to be found which have very slender, short flower stalks and tiny flowers, while others are large, with good-sized flower stalks and large starry flowers. Here is a large pure-white flower, there a tiny lilac one, and farther on a medium-sized one of an entirely different shade of color. The plant is hardy, but as it is picked freely it is decreasing in numbers. It is easily transplanted, and may be made a part of the home flower garden, where it adds much beauty as well as variety.

— the whole world as we know it today ready to fall to pieces. That is what happened to Joseph Graham, the boy who decided to keep a record of events. He decided to SET DOWN THE THING AS IT IS, IN PLAIN LANGUAGE. Then LEARN TO SEE STRAIGHT, and finally, FIX YOUR MIND ON A GREAT WRITER AND STUDY HIS STYLE. He kept to these three rules, and has made as thrilling a tale as I have read for some time.

THE HARRISON CHILDREN, by Otto M. and Mabel S. Becker (Doubleday), is the story of five children and their dog, Snooks. After their father died, people were talking of putting them into a Children's Home to be taken care of. But the Harrison children did not want to go, so one night they climbed into their Ford, piled it high with clothes and camping equipment, and started off. At first they had no definite plans; then they decided to look for the cabin that father had told them about buying. Their adventures were numerous and thrilling, as you can well imagine. The twins got lost. They slept in a barn one night, and there was a fire. Then in every town they were haunted by newspapers which told of their mysterious disappearance, and of course they were dreadfully afraid of being sent back. One of the girls was disguised as a boy; that was fun. During their wanderings Joe, who was on his way to find his grandmother near Dewey, joined the Harrisons who were looking for a camp at Rapidan. When Joe finally calls on his grandmother and she tells him that Rapidan and Dewey are the same town, the story certainly gets interesting. And then we find that they are all related, and Grandma takes all the Harrisons to live with her; their quest is over and everybody is happy.

The Secret

By CLAIRE BOYLE BRACKEN

I'll tell you a wonderful secret, Spring whispered it softly to me; Take this little brown bulb and hide it In the earth where no one can see. Then watch for the beautiful sunshine, And wait for the rain and the dew; And one day a dear little crocus, Will be smiling right up at you!

The Blue Jay

Thoreau calls me
"The bird of October";
I'm blue, white, and purple,
And pretty all over.

I wear a blue cap,
And I call out my name;
I visit your yards—
But I'm not at all tame.

M. LOUISE C. HASTINGS,
in *The Christian Register*.

Book Notes

By ELSIE L. LUSTIG

Did you ever give a marionette show? If you were ever in one, or if you have ever seen one, you will like MARIONETTES, MASKS AND SHADOWS, by Winifred H. Mills and Louise M. Dunn (Doubleday). This book is delightfully illustrated by Corydon Bell. It is decidedly for older boys and girls, and is full of instructions for the making of marionettes and the staging of marionette plays. The first part tells the history of marionettes, tracing them from ancient to modern America—leading up to Gordon Craig and Tony Sarg. We learn how to make properties, how to select a play, about masks—oh, hundreds of things which come up when we are giving a marionette show. In the old days people used to be afraid of shadows; now we are

told how to use them to great advantage. Would you like to stage a shadow cut-out play? This is good fun, and a good deal of work, too. Many nursery rhymes and stories may be used for this—such as Old King Cole, The House that Jack Built, Cinderella, The Three Bears. Bible stories can be turned into beautiful shadow plays. For example, David and Goliath, Daniel in the Lion's Den, Jonah and the Whale, and Joseph and His Brethren. If you have any spare time, do try one of these shows; you will have a great time with it.

THE SPREADING STAIN, by Charles J. Finger (Doubleday), is as enthralling as a story by Jules Verne. And the colored frontispiece by Paul Honore is vivid and exciting. New York in ruins—Chicago once more a wilderness—the country overrun with wild dogs and giant lizards—the sea-lanes swarming with pirates

THE BEACON CLUB

The Editor's Post Box

75 SYDNEY ST.,
DORCHESTER, MASS.

Dear Editor: I am a faithful reader of *The Beacon* and enjoy it very much. I would like to become a member of the Beacon Club. I should like to correspond with some girls of my age, especially girls who live in the West or in foreign countries. I am fifteen years old and go to the Channing Unitarian Church in Dorchester.

Respectfully,
DOROTHY PERKINS.

299 MAIN ST.,
SANFORD, ME.

Dear Editor: I should like to belong to the Beacon Club and wear its pin. I am thirteen years old and I go to the Unitarian Sunday school. My teacher's name is Miss Wilkinson. I should like some one near my age to correspond with me.

Yours sincerely,
NATHALIE PAUL.

10 MARCH TERRACE,
WEST ROXBURY, MASS.

Dear Editor: I go to the Unitarian Sunday School. I have belonged to the Beacon Club before I lost my pin. I love *The Beacon*, especially the Cub's Column. I should like some one of my age to write to me. I am ten and am in the fifth grade.

Yours truly,
CHRISTINE MCKEAN.

339 LAFAYETTE RD.,
PORTSMOUTH, N. H.

Dear Editor: I go to the Unitarian Church. My teacher's name is Mrs. Rugg. I am nine years old. I have a gold pin for going to Sunday school 52 Sundays. I like to read *The Beacon*.

Yours truly,
NANCY BADGER.

323 TUXEDO BLVD.,
WEBSTER GROVES, MO.

Dear Editor: I should like to be a member of the Beacon Club.

I go to the Church of the Unity in St. Louis. My teacher's name is Miss Cammer. I am ten-and-a-half years old and I enjoy the letters in the Sunday *Beacon*.

Yours truly,
ALICE BEACH.

OUR PURPOSE: Helpfulness.
OUR MOTTO: Let your light shine.
OUR BADGE: The Beacon Club Button.

The March Winds

BY JOAN CROCKER (AGE 12)

The March winds are roaring all around,
They swirl the snow from off the ground
And into tall drifts pile it high
'Til it almost scrapes the sky.

The March winds play with scattered
leaves
And give the earth some dry brown
wreaths

Which cluster on her fair white head
And in her eyes, which is not well bred.
HINGHAM, MASS.

A Geography Story-Puzzle

BY MRS. M. LOUISE C. HASTINGS

The *Capital of South Dakota* wanted to go fishing. He got a tin can full of *A City in Germany* and a long pole and started forth for an interesting morning all by himself.

"Wait a moment," called *A City in Oregon*. "I'd like to go with you."

"You can't go fishing in a *Town in England* hat and a dress *City in Egypt*," replied the *Capital of South Dakota*, scornfully.

"Well, don't be a *Mountain in Arizona*," said the *City in Oregon*. "I'll take off my *City in France* clothes and soon be ready to go with you," and, *Capital of West Virginia* around, he took his *City in Pennsylvania* in one hand and his *City in Illinois*, which he had been studying, in the other, and ran home.

Some time later the two boys reached *A City in Quebec* and began their fishing. "Look in that *City in Wales* tree," exclaimed the *City in Oregon*. "There are some *Largest of the Great Lakes* birds there. Do you know what they are?"

"Yes," replied the other boy, "they are cedar waxwings. How polite they are to each other!"

A short time afterwards, *The City in Oregon* said again, "What's that tiny bird just over my head in that *City in Michigan*?"

"That's a *Cape on the Southern Coast of New Jersey* warbler. They do not usually frequent *A City in Michigan* trees. We are lucky to see this bird. They are only seen during migration, and then not very often."

Fishing seemed to be taking a second place in the day's activities. The fish did

Puzzlers

Anagram Verse

Noe yad ta a mite!
'Sit a howlemoes hyrem,
A dogo noe ot vile yb,—
A yad ta a etim.

E. O. S.

Twisted Names of Cities

- | | |
|---------------|---------------|
| 1. Gurtstipb. | 6. Torkebon. |
| 2. Sopaken. | 7. Qinyen. |
| 3. Chirondm. | 8. Jsonack. |
| 4. Htizbale. | 9. Bontso. |
| 5. Orldalpn. | 10. Laweerne. |

Answers to Puzzles in No. 24

Enigma.—Charles Augustus Lindbergh.

Unlabeled Cans.—Candid, canary, candle, candytuft, canard, cancan, candidate, cantata; canopy, canteen, cannon; canny, candy, canal, cantharides.

not bite, and there didn't seem to be any fish to bite in the whole of the *City in Quebec*! But there were plenty of birds to watch, and some of them were uncommon ones.

"There's a new bird. It's *A Sea South of Russia* and *A Sea North of Russia*, and it creeps on the tree trunk," said *The City in Oregon* excitedly. It was always fun to go fishing with *The Capital of South Dakota* when there were birds to study!

"That's a ventriloquist," replied the "bird boy" quickly. "It's the black and white creeping warbler. Sometimes he is quite near but his voice sounds a long way off."

"Did you bring any fish home for supper?" asked the mother of *The Capital of South Dakota*. "No, Mother, it wasn't a fish day, I guess," he replied laughing; "but it was a good bird day, and all such days I call *Sea East of Arabia* letter days."

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